ATLAS

MYSTERY TALES

MYSTERY TALES

SEPT. NO. 15

10¢

"THE VAMPIRE'S COFFIN!"

"THE LITTLE MONSTER!"

"JOHNNY'S LAST JUMP!"

"THE MAN IN THE TANK!"

ON SALE MONTHLY

THE VAMPIRE'S COFFIN!

STOP THEM! SOMEBODY STOP THEM! THAT'S A VAMPIRE'S COFFIN! THEY'RE BRINGING IT ON THE SHIP!
IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL BOX, LINED WITH VELVET, AND TRIMMED WITH GOLD, BUT IT'S NOT WHAT'S ON A CASKET THAT MATTERS, BUT WHO'S IN IT!

ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN MYSTERY TALES #15

THE STILLNESS OF THE NIGHT WATCH IS BROKEN BY THE SEAMAN'S CRY, AND THE MEN OF THE CREW ARE DETERMINED NOT TO ALLOW THE COFFIN ABOARD SHIP..

BUT THE MEN RECKON WITHOUT THE FURY OF CAPTAIN BANNER, THE MAN WHO HATES HIS SHIP AND HIS MEN AND HAS NO FEELINGS FOR THEIR FEARS!

GET BACK TO YOUR FOC'SLES, YOU MANGY CURS! D'YOU THINK I'M GOING TO LOSE THE MONEY FROM THE MUSEUM IN NEW YORK, BECAUSE YOU SWINE ARE AFRAID OF AN' EMPTY VAMPIRE'S COFFIN? THEY WANT THIS COFFIN BROUGHT OVER, AND THEY'LL PAY PLENTY!

WITH GREAT CARE, THE MUSEUM RELIC IS LOWERED INTO THE BLACKNESS OF THE SHIP'S HOLD...

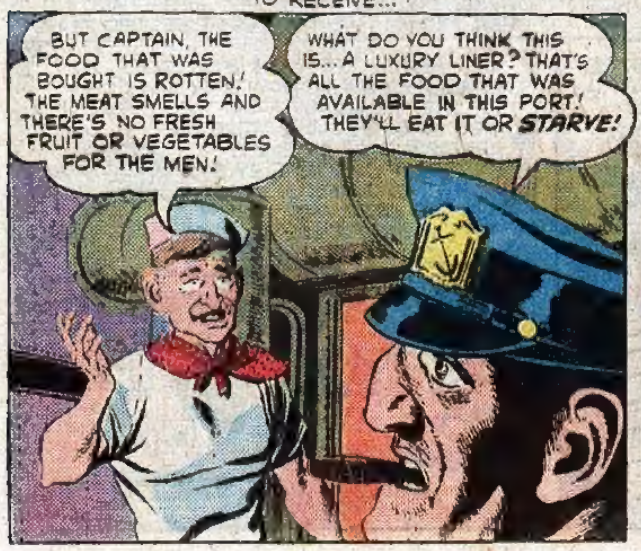
ANGRY, FEARFUL MEN LOOK ON AS THE GROANING ROPES DESCEND...

THEY KNOW OF THE VAMPIRE LEGENDS...

THEY KNOW THAT THE MAN-BAT *ALWAYS* RETURNS TO HIS RESTING PLACE!

AND THROUGH ALL OF THIS, CAPTAIN BANNER SENSES THE HATRED AND RESENTMENT OF HIS MEN...BUT HE DOESN'T CARE...

A FEW DAYS LATER, THE CAPTAIN HAS A PRIVATE CONFERENCE WITH HIS STEWARD ABOUT THE KIND OF FOOD THE MEN ARE TO RECEIVE...


BUT CAPTAIN, THE FOOD THAT WAS BOUGHT IS ROTTEN! THE MEAT SMELLS AND THERE'S NO FRESH FRUIT OR VEGETABLES FOR THE MEN!
WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS IS...A LUXURY LINER? THAT'S ALL THE FOOD THAT WAS AVAILABLE IN THIS PORT! THEY'LL EAT IT OR *STARVE!*

THE MEN DON'T KNOW THAT THE CAPTAIN SPENT MOST OF THE MONEY ALLOTTED FOR FOOD, ON THE PURCHASE OF THE MUSEUM PIECE, BUT THEY DO KNOW THAT THEY ARE BEING TREATED LIKE PIGS!

SLOP, THAT'S WHAT IT IS! THAT LOUSE UP THERE EATS LIKE A KING, WHILE *WE* GET THIS STINKING SLOP!
THIS CAN'T GO ON! WHEN ARE WE GONNA *DO* SOMETHING ABOUT IT?

THE BAD FOOD, AND LACK OF FRESH FRUIT CAUSES THE DISEASE KNOWN AS SCURVY, AND THE SICK, DRAWN CREW CAN FEEL ONLY HATRED FOR THE WELL FED CAPTAIN WHO WALKS AMONG THEM!

CAPTAIN, THE MEN ARE HUNGRY AND RESTLESS, AND THE SCURVY HAS THEM ON EDGE! THEY KNOW YOU HAVE STORES OF FRESH FRUIT FOR YOURSELF! ANYTHING MIGHT HAPPEN!
YOU'RE IMPLYING THEY MIGHT MUTINY, EH? WELL, THERE ARE WAYS OF FINDING THAT OUT, AND STOPPING IT!

(GASP!) YES! I'LL TELL YOU! DON'T WHIP ME ANY MORE! THE CREW IS PLANNING TO MUTINY TOMORROW! DON'T WHIP ME!
ALL RIGHT, YOU SWINE! GET UP ON YOUR FEET AND OUT ON DECK! JUMP TO IT!

BUT THE CAPTAIN REALIZES THAT THE CREW MUST NOT SEE THE LASH MARKS ON THIS MAN'S BACK, AND THERE IS A SIMPLE WAY OUT OF AN EMBARRASSING SITUATION...
HE WON'T HAVE A CHANCE WITH THOSE SHARKS!
WHA...? NO! NO! AAAHHH!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

NO TIME IS LOST BY CAPTAIN BANNER IN CONFISCATING ALL WEAPONS FROM HIS OFFICERS, AND THESE ARE LOCKED IN HIS OWN CABIN...

YOU CAN'T HAVE A MUTINY WITHOUT WEAPONS! WHEN I GET TO NEW YORK, THE MUSEUM AUTHORITIES WILL PAY PLENTY FOR AN AUTHENTIC VAMPIRE COFFIN! I'LL BE RICH!

BUT DOWN IN THE CREW'S QUARTERS, THE SCURVY IS EATING AWAY AT THE BODIES AND SOULS OF THE MEN...

THE POOR KID! HE'S ONLY A CABIN BOY, AND LOOK AT HIM! HE'S GOT A RIGHT TO HAVE FRESH VEGETABLES, WHEN THE CAPTAIN HAS SO MUCH FOR HIMSELF!
SEND A DELEGATION TO ASK HIM FOR IT!

THE MEN PRESENT THEIR REQUEST TO THE CAPTAIN...

...AND THE BOY IS DYING, SIR! HE'S GOT TO HAVE FRESH VEGETABLES AND FRUIT! WE'RE NOT ASKIN' FOR OURSELVES.. JUST FOR HIM!
YOU'RE LYING, ALL OF YOU! THIS IS MINE, AND THERE'S ONLY ENOUGH TO LAST ME BACK TO PORT!

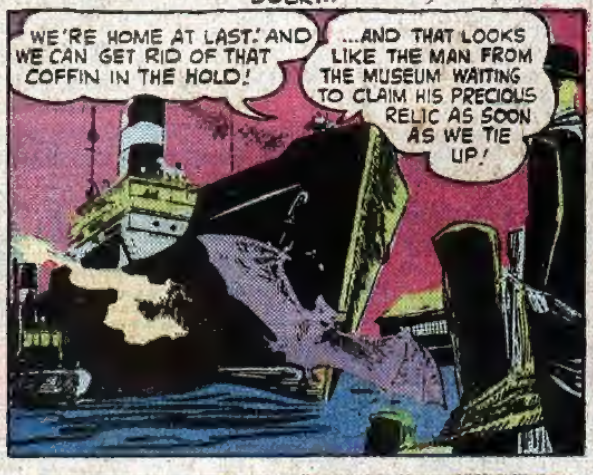
AND WHEN THE DELEGATION RETURNS TO GIVE THEIR REPORT, THEY FIND IT'S TOO LATE...

JOHNNY IS DEAD! IT'S FROM THE SCURVY! HIS BODY WAS TOO WEAK TO STAND IT!
THE CAPTAIN'S NO BETTER THAN A MURDERER! I SAY, HE'S GOT TO PAY FOR IT!

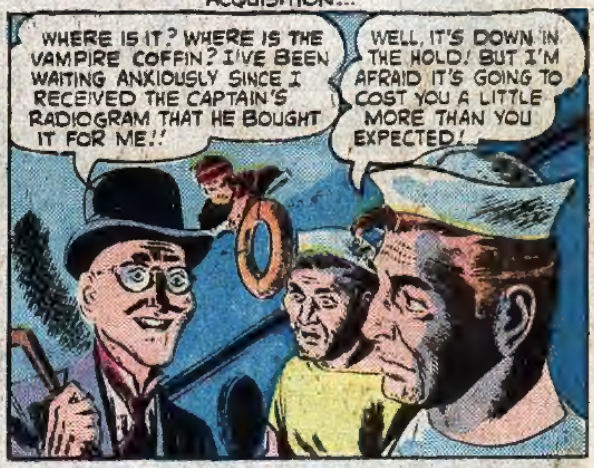
SURE, HE SHOULD PAY, BUT WHAT CAN WE DO, TWO WEEKS OUT OF PORT WITH NO WEAPONS TO USE?
WAIT... I HAVE AN IDEA! THE PERFECT WEAPON, AND THE PERFECT PUNISHMENT FOR THAT MURDERING SWINE!

BUT LATER THAT NIGHT WHEN THE CAPTAIN IS ON DECK, TAKING HIS TURN AROUND THE SHIP, A SUDDEN CREAKING NOISE MAKES HIM TURN, AND...

TWO DAYS LATER, THE SHIP PULLS INTO NEW YORK HARBOR, PREPARING TO TIE UP AT AN EAST RIVER DOCK...


WE'RE HOME AT LAST! AND WE CAN GET RID OF THAT COFFIN IN THE HOLD!
...AND THAT LOOKS LIKE THE MAN FROM THE MUSEUM WAITING TO CLAIM HIS PRECIOUS RELIC AS SOON AS WE TIE UP!

AS SOON AS THE SHIP DOCKS, THE MAN FROM THE MUSEUM COMES ABOARD, EAGER TO SEE HIS NEW ACQUISITION...


WHERE IS IT? WHERE IS THE VAMPIRE COFFIN? I'VE BEEN WAITING ANXIOUSLY SINCE I RECEIVED THE CAPTAIN'S RADIOGRAM THAT HE BOUGHT IT FOR ME!!
WELL, IT'S DOWN IN THE HOLD! BUT I'M AFRAID IT'S GOING TO COST YOU A LITTLE MORE THAN YOU EXPECTED!

THE LITTLE MONSTER

ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN MYSTERY TALES #15

FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN CREATURE PARALYZES JOE FOR AN INSTANT, BUT HE PULLS HIMSELF TOGETHER AND DASHES FOR HIS DESK DRAWER...

BUT THE .45 CALIBER BULLETS DO NOT DISTURB A SCALE OF THE SLIMY THING...

SUDDENLY THE ROOM IS FILLED WITH THE SOUND OF A LOW GROAN, THE VOICE OF THE STRANGE CREATURE...

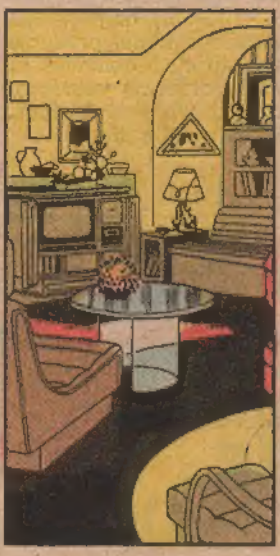
YOU CANNOT HARM ME, EARTHMAN! I COME HERE FROM THE STAR CENTAURUS, AS A FRIEND! I CAN GIVE YOU RICHES AND POWER BEYOND YOUR WILDEST DREAMS!
WHAT KIND OF LINE ARE YOU TRYING TO HAND US?

THAT'S HOW WE LIVE ON THE PLANET CENTAURUS! JUST THINK OF ANYTHING YOU WANT, AND YOU SHALL HAVE IT!
I DON'T BELIEVE THAT STUFF! YOU'RE TRYING TO TRICK US!
MAYBE IT'S TRUE, JOE! TRY IT... SEE WHAT HAPPENS!

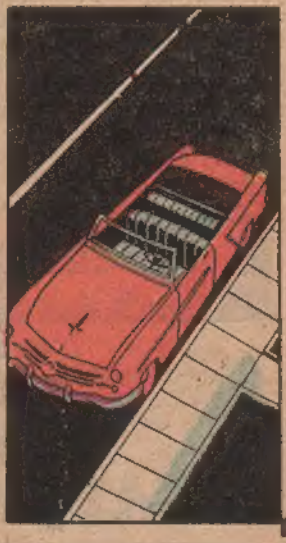
WITH THE SPEED OF A THOUGHT, OR A WISH... RICHES BECOME REALITY!

DREAMS OF NEW CLOTHES COME TRUE!

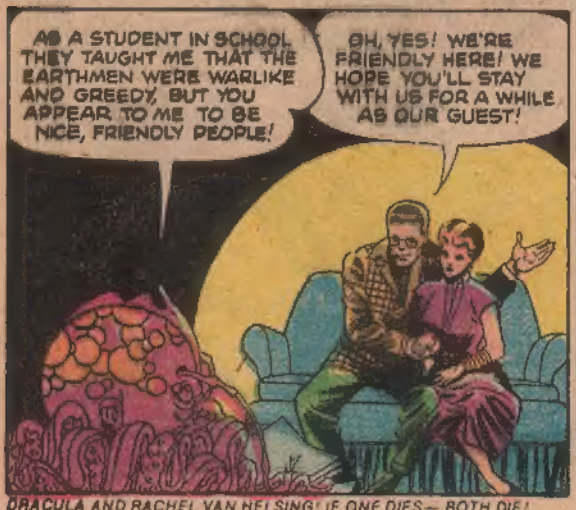
MODEST SURROUNDINGS TURN TO LAVISH WEALTH...



EVEN THE OLD JALOPY BECOMES A SLEEK NEW CONVERTIBLE...



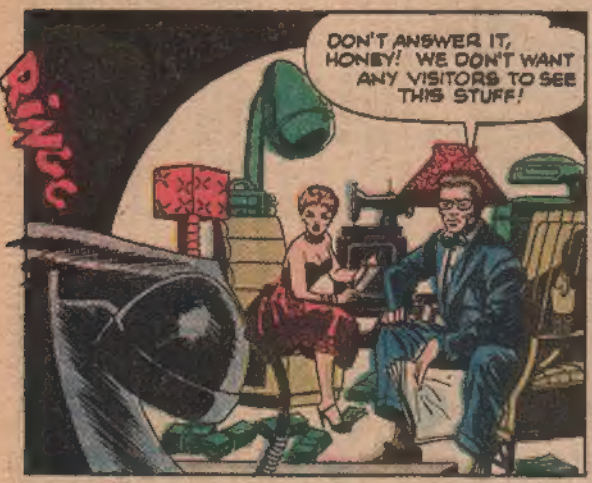
ASTONISHED AT THEIR GOOD FORTUNE, HELEN AND JOE LISTEN TO THE CREATURE'S STORY OF HOW HE CAME FROM THE DISTANT PLANET TO STUDY THE EARTH...


AS A STUDENT IN SCHOOL THEY TAUGHT ME THAT THE EARTHMEN WERE WARLIKE AND GREEDY, BUT YOU APPEAR TO ME TO BE NICE, FRIENDLY PEOPLE!
OH, YES! WE'RE FRIENDLY HERE! WE HOPE YOU'LL STAY WITH US FOR A WHILE AS OUR GUEST!

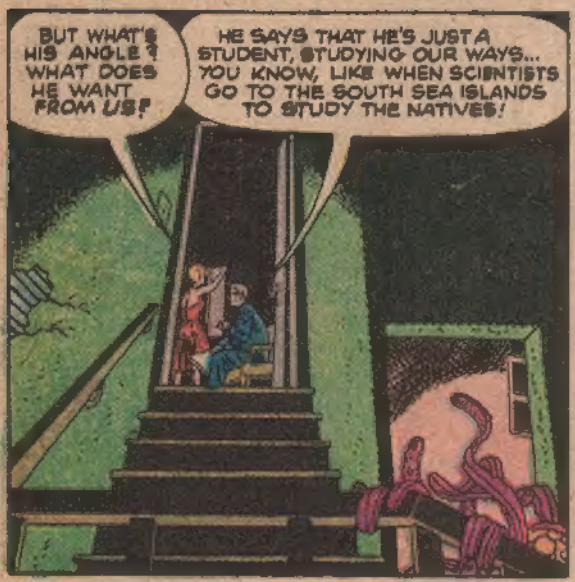
ARE YOU SURE YOU WOULDN'T LIKE SOMETHING TO EAT BEFORE YOU GO TO BED?
AND WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO STAY IN OUR GUEST ROOM?
NO, I'LL JUST STAY IN THAT NICE, DAMP CELLAR YOU'VE GOT! DON'T WORRY ABOUT FOOD... I DON'T EAT THE SAME THINGS YOU DO!
2

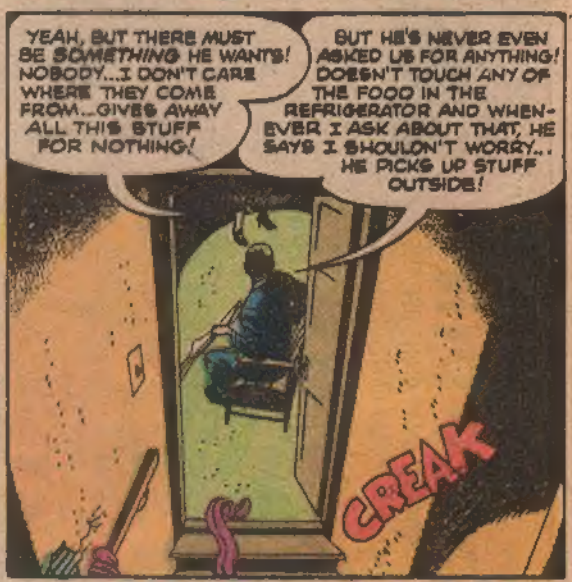
DRACULA AND RACHEL VAN HELSING! IF ONE DIES— BOTH DIE!

LIFE CHANGES COMPLETELY FOR HELEN AND JOE, AND SINCE THEIR VISITOR PROVIDES THEM WITH EVERY COMFORT AND NECESSITY THAT THEY CAN THINK OF, THEY NO LONGER BOTHER TO LEAVE THEIR HOME...



IT'S BEEN WONDERFUL SINCE THAT CREATURE CAME TO LIVE WITH US! NO MORE SALESMEN TO BOTHER US AT THE DOOR...OR ANYONE...
HE'S PROBABLY THE WORLD'S BEST BUTLER! KEEPS EVERYONE OUT...
DAILY BLAB
FLYING SAUCER SPOTTED OVER CITY SUBURBS

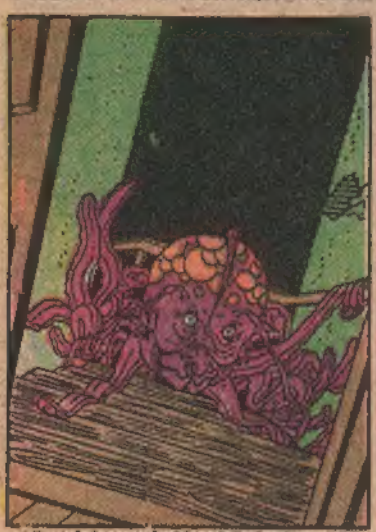

BUT WHAT'S HIS ANGLE? WHAT DOES HE WANT FROM US?
HE SAYS THAT HE'S JUST A STUDENT, STUDYING OUR WAYS... YOU KNOW, LIKE WHEN SCIENTISTS GO TO THE SOUTH SEA ISLANDS TO STUDY THE NATIVES!

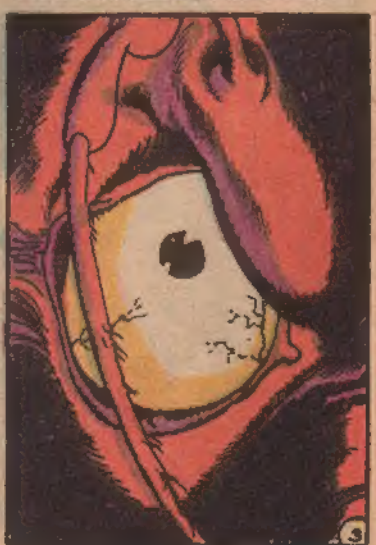

YEAH, BUT THERE MUST BE SOMETHING HE WANTS! NOBODY...I DON'T CARE WHERE THEY COME FROM...GIVES AWAY ALL THIS STUFF FOR NOTHING!
BUT HE'S NEVER EVEN ASKED US FOR ANYTHING! DOESN'T TOUCH ANY OF THE FOOD IN THE REFRIGERATOR AND WHENEVER I ASK ABOUT THAT, HE SAYS I SHOULDN'T WORRY... HE PICKS UP STUFF OUTSIDE!
CREAK

THE THING FROM BEYOND THE DARKNESS OF SPACE LISTENS EAGERLY TO THE EARTHMEN'S WORDS!

SLITHERING NOISELESSLY ALONG THE CELLAR STEPS...

ITS SAUCER-LIKE EYES GLEAM IN THE DARKNESS...EXPECTANTLY...





NOTHING CAN WITHSTAND THE HOWL OF THE BANSHEE— NOT EVEN CAPTAIN AMERICA!

I'VE COME TO TELL YOU THAT I'VE GOT TO LEAVE YOU NOW AND GO BACK TO MY PLANET!
WHAT? YOU...YOU'RE LEAVING US?
YES, I'VE GOT TO TELL MY PEOPLE THAT THEY WERE WRONG ABOUT YOU PEOPLE ON EARTH! PERSONALLY I FOUND YOU VERY FRIENDLY... VERY HOSPITABLE INDEED!
BUT ALL THESE WONDERFUL THINGS YOU'VE GIVEN US... WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM? DO WE HAVE TO GIVE THEM BACK?
OF COURSE NOT! THEY'RE FOR YOU TO KEEP... IN PAYMENT FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY! I'VE BEEN VERY HAPPY HERE!
THEN I DON'T UNDERSTAND! WHY MUST YOU LEAVE US?
OH, I'M NOT LEAVING PERMANENTLY! I'LL BE BACK... IN DUE TIME! IT'S JUST THAT I MUST REPORT TO MY PEOPLE!
THEN WE WILL SEE YOU AGAIN?
YES... I CERTAINLY INTEND TO RETURN! AND WHEN I COME BACK I'LL BRING MANY OF MY PEOPLE, WITH NICE THINGS FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF YOUR PLANET!
WE REALLY WISH YOU WOULDN'T GO! IT'S BEEN WONDERFUL HAVING YOU AS OUR GUEST! YOU'VE BEEN NO TROUBLE... WHY, WE HARDLY REALIZED YOU WERE IN THE HOUSE!
IT'S NEVER BEEN SO PEACEFUL AND QUIET BEFORE! COME BACK SOON! I'M SURE ALL OTHER EARTHMEN WILL WELCOME YOU WITH OPEN ARMS!
I'M SURE THEY WILL!

THE VISITOR PREPARES TO MAKE HIS DEPARTURE...
GOOD-BYE AND DON'T FORGET...YOU PROMISED TO COME BACK! WE'LL MISS YOU!
EEEK
MY PEOPLE WILL BE PLEASED TO VISIT SUCH HOSTS AS YOU! YOU'VE BEEN WONDERFUL!
WHAT IS IT?
A MONSTER!
KILL IT! GET A GUN!
THOSE FOOLS DON'T KNOW WHAT WE KNOW.. THAT THING WAS PRETTY NICE TO HAVE AROUND!
HE WAS WONDERFUL... ESPECIALLY THE WAY HE ANSWERED THE DOOR AND KEPT PEOPLE FROM BOTHERING US! I NEVER SPENT SUCH A RESTFUL PERIOD IN MY LIFE!
YEAH, AND IT WAS NICE TO HAVE A VISITOR LIKE THAT WHO GAVE US ANYTHING WE WANTED.. AND NEVER BOTHERED US FOR SOMETHING TO EAT...
HE SAID HE PICKED UP STUFF OUTSIDE TO EAT...CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT HE MEANT... I NEVER ACTUALLY SAW HIM LEAVE THE CELLAR...EXCEPT WHEN SOMEONE RANG THE BELL AND HE GOT RID OF THEM SO THEY WOULDN'T DISTURB US!
HE MUST'VE REALLY SCARED THEM...THEY NEVER CAME BACK TO THE HOUSE!
THE END
5

JOHNNY'S LAST JUMP!
N-NO! YOU MUSTN'T TAKE THEM FROM ME! I-I WON'T LET YOU! THEY ARE ALL I HAVE LEFT! DON'T TAKE THEM FROM ME! PLEASE!!
A MYSTERY TALE TO SHOCK YOUR SENSES!
ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN MYSTERY TALES #15

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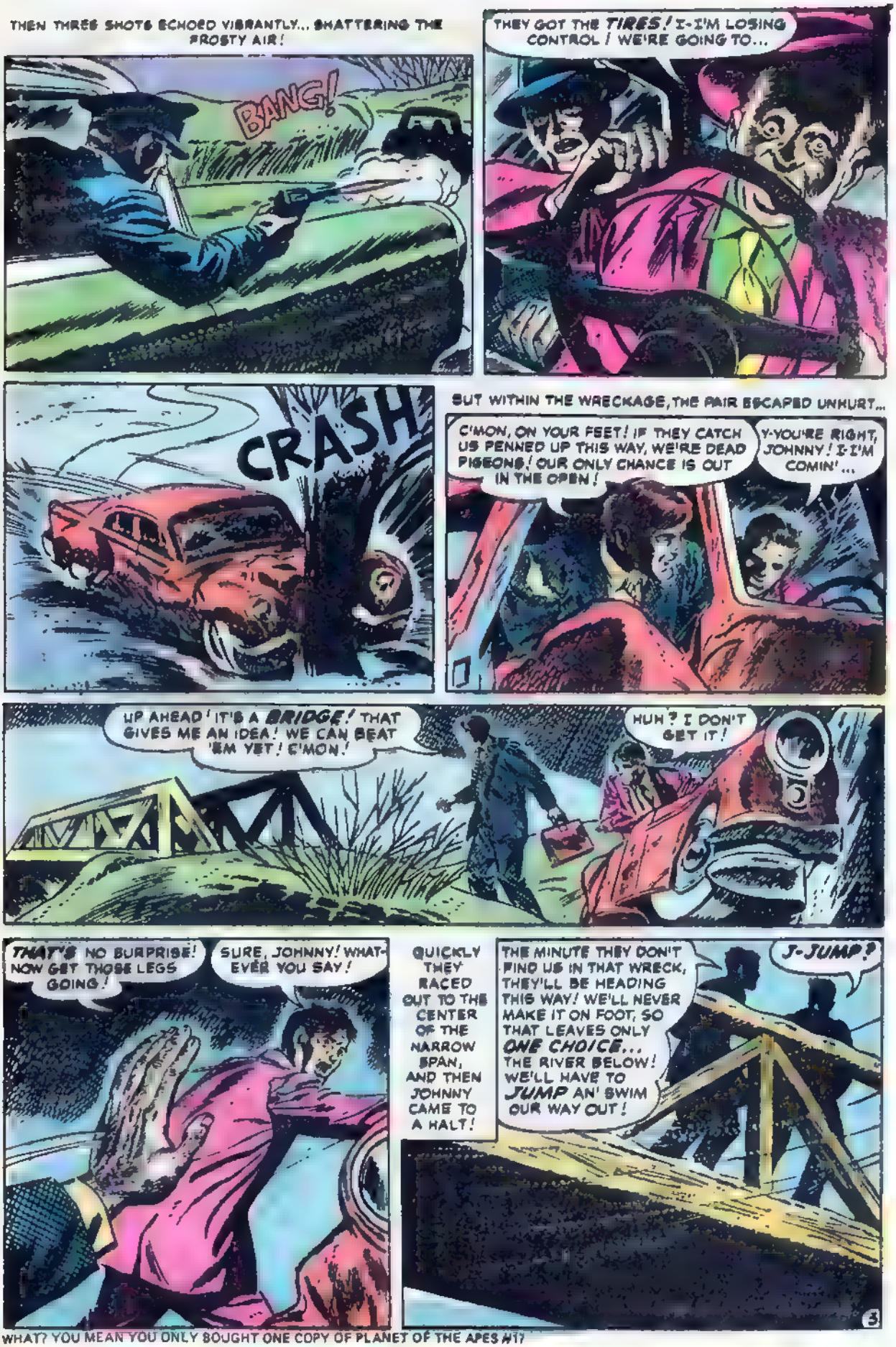
YOU'RE ALWAYS KILLIN', JOHNNY! EVERY TIME WE GO OUT ON A JOB, YOU'VE GOT TO DIRTY THINGS UP!
STOP BEEFING, YA JERK... AN' GET BUSY ON THAT SAFE! ONE MORE PEEP OUTA YOU, AND YOU'LL BE KEEPING THE OLD GEEZER COMPANY!
SILENCE FELL BETWEEN THEM, BROKEN ONLY BY THE RASP OF METAL AS THE CUTTING TOOL BIT DEEPLY INTO THE STEEL DOOR! THEN, WHEN TEN MINUTES HAD PASSED...
STOP DRAGGING IT OUT! AN' QUIT SHAKING! THE WAY YOU'RE GOING AT IT, WE'LL BE HERE FOR A MONTH!
IT'S GIVING, JOHNNY! I'M ALMOST THROUGH THE TUMBLER NOW! ONE MORE TURN AND... I'M THROUGH!
WHAT DID I...?
HOLD IT, STUPID! THE DOOR'S WIRED!
CLANNNNNG
CLANNNNNG
L-LET'S GO, JOHNNY! THAT THING'LL WAKE THE DEAD! WE'LL BE CAUGHT!
AND LEAVE THIS STUFF BEHIND? GET OUT TO THE CAR AND GET THE MOTOR GOING! WE'LL BLOW AS SOON AS I LOAD UP!
CLANNNNGGG!
MINUTES LATER, THE POWERFUL CAR LEAPED FOR THE OPEN ROAD WITH A THROATY ROAR...
HEAD NORTH, EGG HEAD, AND DON'T TAKE YOUR FOOT OFF THE FLOORBOARD! OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO HIT THE MAIN ARTERIES AN' GET LOST IN TRAFFIC!
I NEVER DREAMED THE TIN CAN WAS WIRED, JOHNNY... MONEST I DIDN'T!
SHUT UP AN' LEMME THINK! THE OLD GUY KEPT NO SERVANTS, SO WIRING THE SAFE COULD MEAN ONLY ONE THING! WHEN IT RINGS HERE, IT MUST BE RINGING SOMEWHERE ELSE TOO!
AND AS THOUGH IN ANSWER TO JOHNNY'S THOUGHTS...
SIRENS! IT'S COPPERS, JOHNNY! THEY'LL GET US! WE'LL HANG FOR MURDER!
IF YOU BLOW DOWN NOW, I'LL BLOW YOUR HEAD OFF!
WHEEE
2

DEATH WAITS FOR GABRIEL, DEVIL HUNTER, IN THE HAUNT OF HORROR!


THEN THREE SHOTS ECHOED VIBRANTLY... SHATTERING THE FROSTY AIR!
BANG!
THEY GOT THE TIRES! I-I'M LOSING CONTROL! WE'RE GOING TO...
CRASH
BUT WITHIN THE WRECKAGE, THE PAIR ESCAPED UNHURT...
C'MON, ON YOUR FEET! IF THEY CATCH US PENNED UP THIS WAY, WE'RE DEAD PIGEONS! OUR ONLY CHANCE IS OUT IN THE OPEN!
Y-YOU'RE RIGHT, JOHNNY! I-I'M COMIN' ...
UP AHEAD! IT'S A BRIDGE! THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA! WE CAN BEAT 'EM YET! C'MON!
HUH? I DON'T GET IT!
THAT'S NO SURPRISE! NOW GET THOSE LEGS GOING!
SURE, JOHNNY! WHATEVER YOU SAY!
QUICKLY THEY RACED OUT TO THE CENTER OF THE NARROW SPAN, AND THEN JOHNNY CAME TO A HALT!
THE MINUTE THEY DON'T FIND US IN THAT WRECK, THEY'LL BE HEADING THIS WAY! WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT ON FOOT, SO THAT LEAVES ONLY ONE CHOICE... THE RIVER BELOW! WE'LL HAVE TO JUMP AN' SWIM OUR WAY OUT!
J-JUMP?
3

WHAT? YOU MEAN YOU ONLY BOUGHT ONE COPY OF PLANET OF THE APES #1?

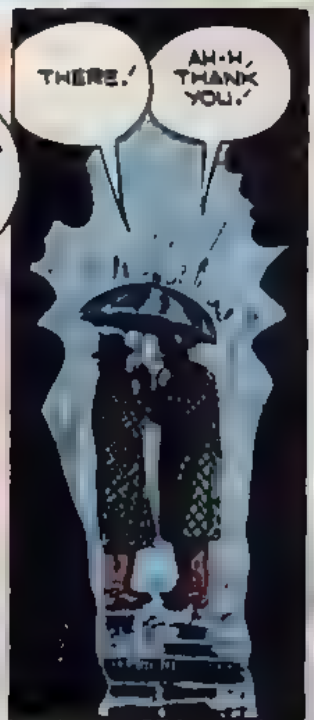
N-NO! I WON'T JUMP! I CAN'T SWIM!
THEN IT'S YOUR FUNERAL, BECAUSE YOU'RE JUMPING ALL THE SAME! I DON'T CARE IF YOU GO DOWN LIKE A STONE, BUT I'M NOT LEAVING YOU HERE TO SQUEAL TO THE COPS!
YOU CAN'T MAKE ME JUMP! YOU CAN'T MAKE ME!
I'M GETTING OUTA HERE! YA CAN MAKE ME... ARGHHH!
BA BA
SO LONG, SUCKER! I NEVER INTENDED SPLITTING THIS LOOT WITH YOU, ANYWAY! YOU'VE MADE IT EASY FOR ME, PAL... REAL EASY!
THEN, AS THE POLICE CHARGED UP...
HALT... OR I'LL SHOOT!
SAVE YOUR AMMO, COPPER! I'M MAKIN' TRACKS OUTA HERE!
SO JOHNNY JUMPED! IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL DIVE, BUT...
JOHNNY WASN'T MAKING ANY TRACKS! HE DIDN'T EVEN MAKE A RIPPLE... NOT WHEN THE RIVER WAS FROZEN SOLID!
THE END.

A MURDEROUS BAND OF S.S. OFFICERS FLED GERMANY ON THE EVE OF NAZI DEFEAT. RESETTLING IN A SMALL SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRY THEY STARTED TO RAISE AN ARMY TO CONQUER THE WORLD...

"SHHH!"

THAT'S THE BUILDING, KARL! THAT'S WHERE THE AMERICAN SCIENTISTS ARE WORKING ON THE SECRET PROJECT!
SHHHHHH! ONE OF THEM IS COMING OUT! WE'LL GRAB HIM AS HE PASSES! IT'S THE ONLY WAY WE CAN LEARN WHAT THE SECRET PROJECT IS!
ART BY: DICK AYERS

ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN MYSTERY TALES #15



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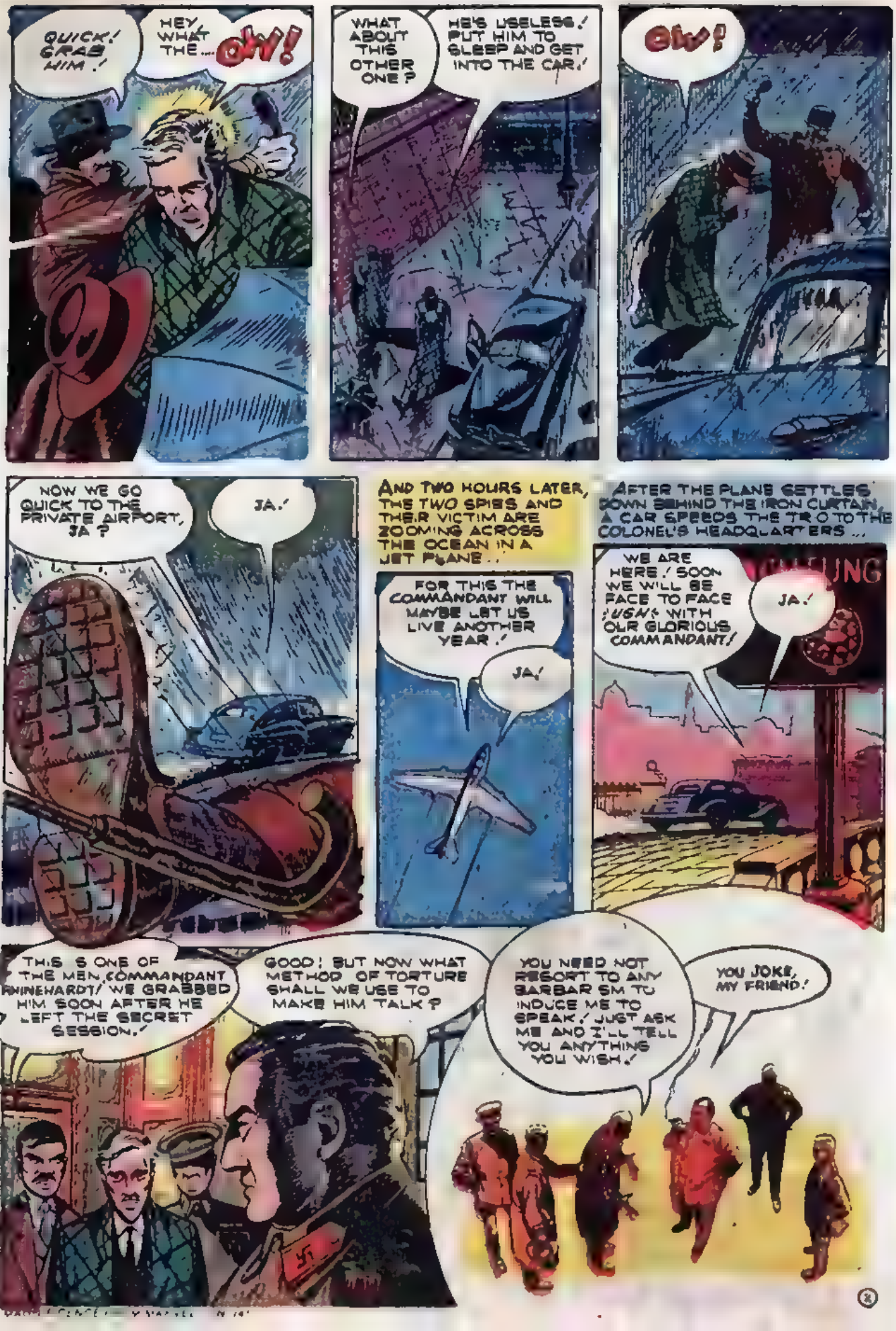

QUICK! GRAB HIM!
HEY, WHAT THE....
OH!
WHAT ABOUT THIS OTHER ONE?
HE'S USELESS! PUT HIM TO SLEEP AND GET INTO THE CAR!
OW!
NOW WE GO QUICK TO THE PRIVATE AIRPORT, JA?
JA!
AND TWO HOURS LATER, THE TWO SPIES AND THEIR VICTIM ARE ZOOMING ACROSS THE OCEAN IN A JET PLANE...
FOR THIS THE COMMANDANT WILL MAYBE LET US LIVE ANOTHER YEAR!
JA!
AFTER THE PLANE SETTLES DOWN BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN, A CAR SPEEDS THE TRIO TO THE COLONEL'S HEADQUARTERS...
WE ARE HERE! SOON WE WILL BE FACE TO FACE WITH OUR GLORIOUS COMMANDANT!
JA!
THIS IS ONE OF THE MEN, COMMANDANT RHINEHARDT! WE GRABBED HIM SOON AFTER HE LEFT THE SECRET SESSION!
GOOD! BUT NOW WHAT METHOD OF TORTURE SHALL WE USE TO MAKE HIM TALK?
YOU NEED NOT RESORT TO ANY BARBARISM TO INDUCE ME TO SPEAK! JUST ASK ME AND I'LL TELL YOU ANYTHING YOU WISH!
YOU JOKE, MY FRIEND!

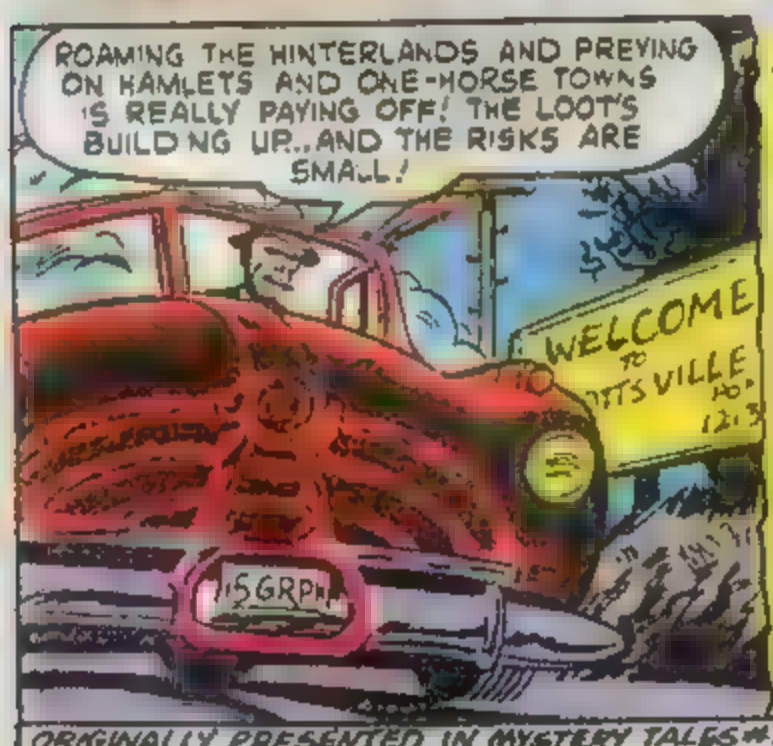
YOU ARE NOT ? THEN TELL US ... WHAT IS THE GREAT SECRET PROJECT WHICH AMERICA IS WORKING ON ? FOR MONTHS MY AGENTS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO FIND OUT... BUT THEY REPORT NOTHING !'
SECRET PROJECT ? OH... YES... YES, OF COURSE ! IT'S A GERM... A SYNTHETIC SERUM!
AH-HA, I KNEW IT ! NOW OUR LIES CAN BE TRUE ! THE AMERICAN DOGS ARE PLANNING GERM WARFARE AGAINST US !'
NO, NOTHING SO CRUDE AND OBSOLETE! THIS SYNTHETIC GERM I'M REFERRING TO, WHEN ALLOWED TO INFECT A PERSON, IT ALMOST INSTANTLY TRANSFORMS THAT PERSON INTO A BRAWNY, FEARLESS FIGHTER.'
TO PRODUCE INVINCIBLE ARMIES, JA? BUT HOW IS THIS DONE ? WE MUST KNOW.'
IT'S QUITE SIMPLE! I'LL SHOW YOU IF YOU'LL BE GOOD ENOUGH TO SUPPLY ME WITH THE NECESSARY INGREDIENTS AND UTENSILS.'
THE NAZI ARE DELIGHTED, OVERJOYED TO HAVE KIDNAPED SUCH A COOPERATIVE AMERICAN! AND ANYTHING HE ASKS FOR IS IMMEDIATELY BROUGHT TO HIS PRISON CELL ....
NOW I'LL NEED SOME VIRUS ... A TYPE WHICH WILL SPREAD THRU THE SYSTEM RAPIDLY !'
I WILL CONTACT OUR DOCTORS AT ONCE'
AND TWO WEEKS LATER...
I AM FINISHED! HERE ARE ENOUGH SYNTHETIC GERMS TO INFECT YOUR ENTIRE ARMY AND TURN THEM INTO POWERFUL, SINEWY FIGHTERS!
JA! GOOD! BUT BEFORE I INFECT THE ENTIRE ARMY... I WILL FIRST TRY IT ON ONE SOLDIER!
PRIVATE WALTER KRUPPEL STEPS FORWARD AND IS INFECTED!
THE CHANGE STARTS IMMEDIATELY...

THIS IS IT! THE FINAL SHOWDOWN WITH ZODIAC — NOW IN AVENGERS #122!

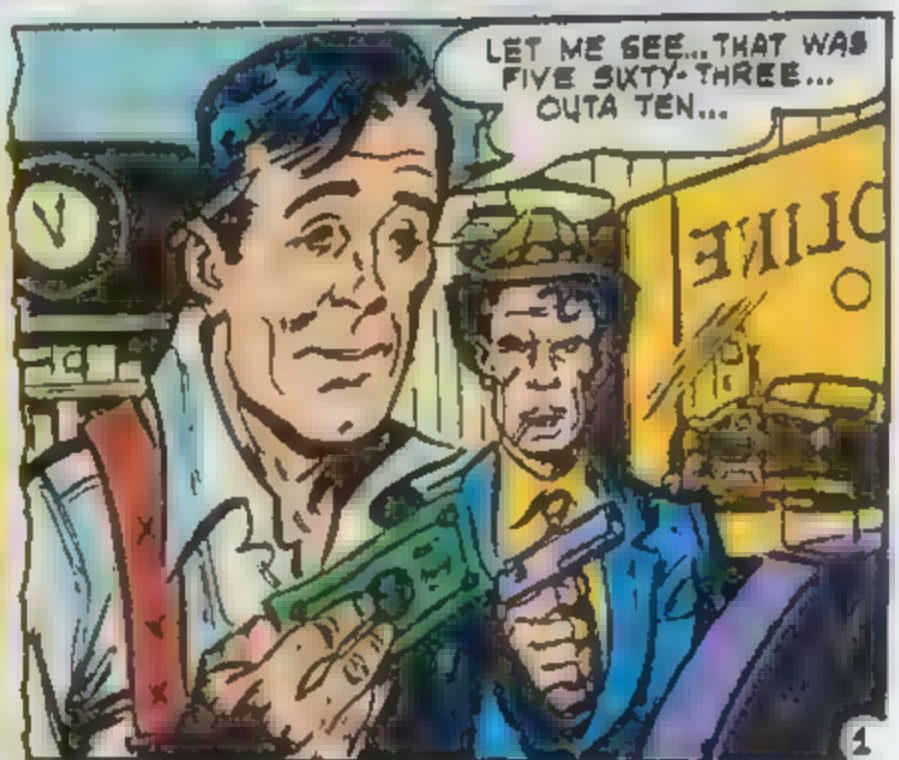
THERE YOU ARE! IT WORKED... JUST AS I SAID! HE'S A POWERFUL, FIERCE FIGHTER!
AH-HA, YOU SWINE! SO YOU ADMIT IT WAS A CAPITALISTIC TRICK TO MAKE BLABBERING MONKEYS OUT OF MY ENTIRE ARMY!
BUT I AM TOO CLEVER FOR YOU, AMERICAN... I TESTED THE GERM BEFORE INFECTING ALL MY SOLDIERS AND ALL MY PEOPLE!
I'M RATHER A GENIUS MYSELF, COMMANDER.. AND I'VE BEEN RELEASING SYNTHETIC GERMS OUT OF MY CELL WINDOW ALL MORNING! LOOK OUT THERE!
IN THE NAME OF HITLER... IT ...IT IS TRUE!
UK?
OOK?
OOK?
OOK!
QUICK! GRAB HIM! DISPOSE OF HIM BEFORE... EE... BLUB-BA BLA-BLUB...
LOOK! OUR GLORIOUS LEADER HE HAS TURNED INTO A BIG MONKEY!
I'LL CUT OFF THE DOG'S HEAD FOR THIS! I'LL... I'LL... OH, SUFFERING SOVIETS! LOOK... LOOK AT THIS LABEL ON HIS COAT...
WE.. WE GRABBED THE WRONG MAN... WE... BLA-BLA-BLUB-BLA-
STATE INSANE ASYLUM
SW-H-H-H-H-H-H! OR EVERYBODY WILL KNOW I ESCAPED AGAIN!
THE END

STAN LEE PRESENTS: CRYPT OF SHADOWS!™

THE MAN IN THE TANK!


ROAMING THE HINTERLANDS AND PREYING ON HAMLETS AND ONE-HORSE TOWNS 'S REALLY PAYING OFF! THE LOOT'S BUILD NG UP..AND THE RISKS ARE SMALL!
WELCOME TO
15GRPH

YEAH, IT'S A CINCH! THESE HICKS KNOW FROM NOTH NG! ONE PEEK AT THE IRON IN YOUR M TT AND THE STARCH SNAPS OUT OF THEIR BACKBONES LIKE YOU WERE DILLINGER!



ORIGINALLY PRESENTED IN MYSTERY TALES #15

DON'T BOTHER WITH THE CHANGE, BUSTER... I'LL TAKE IT ALL!
B-BUT YOU C-CAN'T! (ULP!) I...I ...OKAY, MISTER... OKAY!

THAT'S A GOOD BOY! NOW YOU STAY PUT FOR AN HOUR! I GOT GOOD EARS! ONE LITTLE YELP AND I'LL TURN BACK, AND...
D-DON'T WORRY, MISTER! I...I GETCHA! GEE...I AIN'T EVER BEEN ROBBED BEFORE!
ED'S

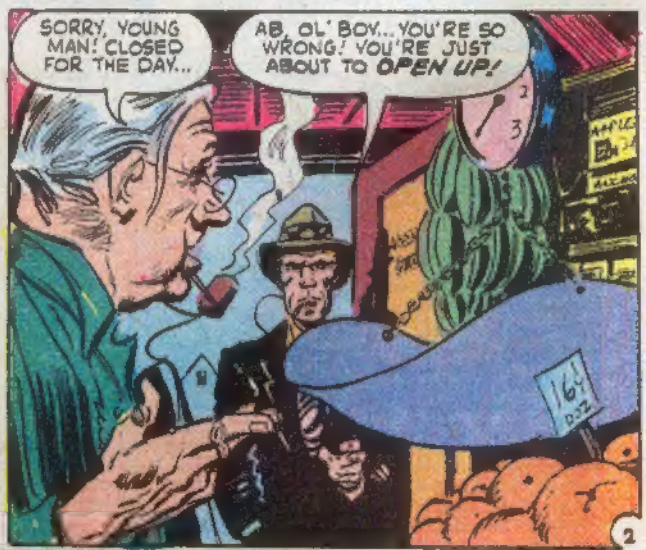
YEAH, PETE...YOU LOOK PRETTY BIG-TIME, HERE IN THE STICKS! A REAL SET-UP! NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT! FIVE GETS YOU TEN THE LOCAL ONE-MAN POLICE FORCE GOES INTO HIDING FOR A WEEK WHEN HE HEARS ABOUT THIS!
FAIR EXCHANGE! I GET THE DOUGH...THE KID GETS SOMETHING TO TELL THE HOME FOLKS ABOUT!

LET THE REST OF THE BOYS STICK TO THE BIG BURG...WITH A BLUE COAT ON EVERY CORNER! ME... I'LL TAKE THE BYWAYS...WHERE THE LOCAL GENDARMES DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH A CROOK IF THEY SEE ONE!

SO IT GOES...MIDDLEBURG, LITTLEBURG, TINYBURG! HICKSVILLE, MAPLEVILLE, WOODVILLE! YOU COMB THE COUNTRY...AND YOUR ITINERARY'S A CINCH!

AND THAT'S THE WAY THINGS STAND, PETE HENRY! UP TO THAT BALMY SUMMER EVENING WHEN YOU PULL UP IN FRONT OF A SMALL STORE AND...

THE STORE SHOULD BE READY TO CLOSE AT THIS HOUR! A WHOLE DAY'S RECEIPTS, WAITIN' TO BE PLUCKED!
ABERNATHY'S
GROCERIES
PROP


SORRY, YOUNG MAN! CLOSED FOR THE DAY...
AB, OL' BOY... YOU'RE SO WRONG! YOU'RE JUST ABOUT TO OPEN UP!

FUNNY ABOUT AN OLD GEEZER LIKE ABERNATHY, EH, PETE? HE ALMOST CAUGHT YOU OFF GUARD THE WAY HE CAME UP BEHIND THE COUNTER WITH...

YOU WHEEL TOWARD THE DOOR! ANOTHER SURPRISE! THE SHOTS HAVE ATTRACTED ATTENTION...

YOU KNOW THE PANIC OF BEING TRAPPED! YOU MAKE NO PHILOSOPHICAL COMMENT ABOUT THE LOCAL "POLICE FORCE" AS YOU GAIN THE REAR DOOR...

YOU TEAR DOWN THE CLUTTERED ALLEY... YOUR HEART IN YOUR MOUTH AS YOU HEAR THE SHOTS AND SHOUTS OF YOUR PURSUERS...

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

YOU STUMBLE BLINDLY ON IN THE GLOOM, THE CLOSENESS OF THE GUNSHOTS URGING YOU ON! THEN, SUDDENLY, YOU STUMBLE OVER RAILROAD TRACKS AND YOU SEE...

THEY'RE GETTIN' CLOSER! GOTTA HIDE! THAT WATER TOWER! MAYBE...

THEY HAVEN'T SEEN ME! IF I CAN GET TO THE TOP!

YOU MAKE IT! THE TANK'S ALMOST FULL...YOU JUMP IN! THE WATER'S MOMENTARILY COLD, BUT IT ACTS LIKE A BALM...COOLS THE FEVER OF YOUR PANIC...

THEY'LL NEVER THINK OF LOOKING FOR ME *HERE*... THE STUPID HICKS! THE DAY'LL NEVER COME WHEN I CAN'T OUTSMART ANY LOCAL YOKELS!

YOU'RE NOT TOO GOOD A SWIMMER, BUT OCCASIONALLY YOU REACH UP... CLING TO THE RIM OF THE TANK FOR A BREATHER...

I CAN HOLD OUT LIKE THIS UNTIL THOSE GUYS GIVE UP TRYIN' TO FIND ME! THEN I'LL BE FREE AS A BIRD!

THAT WAS THE QUICKEST DISAPPEARIN' ACT I EVER SEEN! TH' KILLER JES' UP AN' VANISHED!

THEN OUT OF THE NIGHT, THE ROAR OF A LOCOMOTIVE...

THE TRAIN COMES TO A RASPING, NOISY HALT NEAR THE WATER TOWER...

ALL RIGHT, MEN... KEEP YER EYES PEELED WHILE THE ENGINE'S TAKING ON WATER! WE DON'T WANT THAT VARMINT GETTIN' ABOARD AN' PULLING OUT WITH HER!

THE FINAL BATTLE BETWEEN ***THONGOR*** *AND THE DRAGON LORDS! NOW ON SALE!*

YOU SMILE AS YOU PADDLE ABOUT, PLEASED THAT THE NOISE OF THE LOCOMOTIVE DROWNS OUT THE SOUNDS OF YOUR SPLASHING...

BUT MAYBE YOU'VE PADDLED TOO LONG! YOU'RE TIRING... YOU REACH UP...UP...UP!

AGAIN AND AGAIN YOU TRY...LUNGING FOR A HAND-HOLD! BUT IT'S NO USE! THE SLIMY-SMOOTH WALLS MOCK YOUR ATTEMPTS!

BUT YOUR WORST FEARS ARE REALIZED! THE DRAINING STOPS... HALF-WAY DOWN! YOU TRY STANDING ON THE BOTTOM...

YES, PETE, IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD! YOU HEAR THE TRAIN PULL AWAY... YOU SCREAM USING UP A VITAL PORTION OF YOUR LAST BREATH... BUT ALL IS QUIET OUTSIDE!